

REMARKS

In the April 30, 2004 Office Action, claims 1-4, 6, 10-15, 17, 21, and 22 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 5, 7-9, 16, and 18-20 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the April 30, 2004 Office Action, Applicants have amended the specification, added a new drawing, and amended the claims 12-13, and 18-22 as indicated above. Claims 1-11 and 16 have been canceled. Claims 13 and 21-22 have been amended only to clarify the language and modify the dependency. Claims 12 and 18-20 were amended in independent form containing all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, while also clarifying the language. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 12-15 and 17-22 are pending, with claims 12 and 18-20 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Specification

Applicants have found a few errors in the specification upon review thereof. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the specification as presented above. For instance, the specification has been amended to provide a clearer antecedent basis for the terms "support portion" and "interlocking portion" in the claims. Applicants believe that the specification is now correct and complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1).

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102, 103

On pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 6, 10-12, 17, 21, and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,316,239 to Sugawara ("Sugawara patent"). Also on page 3 of the Office Action, claims 2-4 and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sugawara patent. In response, Applicants have canceled claims 1-11 and amended independent claim 12 to clearly define the present invention over the prior art of record.

In particular, independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate limitations of claim 16, which has been indicated as allowable in the Office Action and is now canceled. More specifically, independent claim 12 as amended now recites that the position-restricting

portion includes an annular groove formed on the outer circumferential surface of the guide shaft and a plate-shaped member having a U-shaped groove that is detachably and reattachably fitted to the annular groove, and that the plate-shaped member is pressed toward the guide shaft by the lid member. These limitations were originally in claim 16, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter in the April 30, 2004 Office Action and is now canceled. Clearly, the arrangement of claim 12 as now amended is *not* disclosed or suggested by the Sugawara patent or any other prior art of record.

More specifically, the Sugawara patent does not disclose or suggest the position restricting portion as set forth in now-amended claim 12. The Office Action asserts that the unnumbered member at the left end of the guide shaft 14 in Figure 3 of the Sugawara patent corresponds to the position restricting portion of claims 1 and 12. Although the Sugawara patent does not disclose an annular groove on the guide shaft or a plate-shaped member that is detachably and reattachably fitted to the annular groove, the Office Action on page 3 asserts that such arrangements are well known in the art. However, the Office Action then acknowledges that the Sugawara patent does not disclose or suggest *a plate-shaped member that is pressed toward the guide shaft by the lid member*. Furthermore, Applicants believe that there is no suggestion in the Sugawara patent that the unnumbered member of the Sugawara patent can be pressed toward the guide shaft 14 by a lid member, since there seems to be no mechanical contact between the unnumbered member and the wall of the reel body as seen in Figure 2 of the Sugawara patent. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 as now amended is not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that the dependent claims 13-15, 17, 21, and 22 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 18, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claims 1 and 12, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 5, 7-9, 16, and 18-20 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application.

In response, Applicants have canceled claims 5 and 7-9, and amended claims 18-19 to place them in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, as well as to define the invention even more clearly.

Limitations of claim 16 have been incorporated in claim 12 as discussed above, and claim 16 has now been canceled.

Regarding claim 20, Applicants have deleted the language that the snap rings contact both side surfaces of one support portion and that the support portion is sandwiched by the snap rings, since it is not supported by the specification and Figure 13 as originally filed. Applicants believe, however, that claim 20 continues to be allowable over the prior art of record because the Sugawara patent or any other prior art of records does not disclose a structure having two snap rings such that the guide shaft is prevented from disengaging in either direction.

Thus, Applicants believe that claims 18-20 as amended above are now in condition for allowance.

New Figure 16

Applicants wish to add new Figure 16, which is attached hereto. Figure 16 shows the structure described as an alternate embodiment (f) in the paragraph beginning at page 21, line 1 as originally filed. Since the structure shown in new Figure 16 is described in the specification as originally filed, Applicants believe that no new matter has been added by the new Figure 16.

Prior Art Citation


In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

* * *

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 12-15 and 18-22 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 10/602,607
Amendment dated August 30, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 30, 2004

Respectfully submitted,


Kiyoe K. Kabashima
Reg. No. 54,874

SHINJYU GLOBAL IP COUNSELORS, LLP
1233 Twentieth Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
(202)-293-0444

Dated: Aug 30, 2004

G:\08-AUG04-MTSN-US020194 Amendment.doc

Appl. No. 10/602,607
Amendment dated August 30, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 30, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawings includes a new Figure 16. Applicants wish to add this new Figure 16.

Attachment: one (1) new sheet